



City of Prescott

City Council - Study Session

December 12, 2023 | 1:00 PM
201 N Montezuma Street
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Goode called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Phil Goode - Mayor
Connie Cantelme - Mayor Pro Tem
Lois Fruhwirth - Councilwoman
Ted Gambogi - Councilman
Brandon Montoya - Councilman
Eric Moore - Councilman
Cathey Rusing - Councilmember

3. DISCUSSION

- A. Presentation and Discussion Regarding Community Outreach and Public Participation Plan for the Effluent Tank, Pipeline & SR89 Widening Project.

City Manager Katie Gregory provided an introduction to the discussion and the previous June Study Session presentation regarding public outreach and the projects. The goal is to consider all of the projects that need to be done over time in order to best address how needed centralization and traffic issues in the area could be addressed. Knowing that this area is sensitive and important to our area staff felt it was important to do outreach and receive input from the community regarding the events that have been held over the last several month.

Public Works Director Gwen Rowitsch continued the discussion and addressed Council regarding objectives, centralization, widening & traffic, public outreach, survey results, and top responsive topics.

Objectives:

- * Continue centralization
- * Citywide traffic system functionality - safety enhancements, level of service of C or better, reduce public inconvenience
- * Natural resource preservation and conservation - enhance community amenity (Granite Dells Regional Park)
- * Optimize the lifecycle of public infrastructure and roadways
- * Transparency and virtual meeting room
- * Community feedback

Capital Programs Manager Tim Sherwood discussed the current utilities in the

area.

Centralization:

- * 2017 - new force main installed from Sundog Lift Station to Lillian Lane
- * Existing infrastructure - 24" effluent line, 18" gravity line (Lillian Lane to Kieckhefer), future effluent line

Councilman Gambogi asked about the 18" gravity line being on the left, effluent on the right and asked for confirmation that the future will go down the middle of the roadway.

Mr. Sherwood responded that this is conceptual, but confirmed that it is approximately where everything exists and where it will need to go.

Councilmember Rusing asked if it would be possible to use the old trench on the right if the road were not widened.

Mr. Sherwood responded that line is set to be converted to a gravity line, and the effluent will be a forced main.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked if blasting would be for the full length of the project.

Mr. Sherwood responded that soil boring would be done to determine where that would need to be done.

Transportation Manager Ian Mattingly continued with a discussion of why widening is being proposed.

Why Widen:

- * Regional roadway - state highway and primary commuter route
- * 17-mile stretch of SR89 between SR69 interchange to Road 3 North, Chino Valley - the only remaining two lane section is 2.5 miles between Willow Lake Road and Phippen Trail
- * Regional Transportation Plan - highest priority widening project in the region and improve capacity/level of service (LOS)
- * Anticipated Widening - Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) reserved 150' right-of-way
- * One of only three routes into Prescott

Mayor Goode asked if the east Prescott highway will eventually connect north-south.

Mr. Mattingly confirmed, but this would be in the Prescott Valley region.

What Does the Data Say:

- * Based on 2021 and 2023 data - the road is currently at level C LOS
- * By 2030 it is anticipated that the road will be operating at level D/E
- * Staff is attempting to provide the infrastructure, including the roadway, at a level that will meet the desired LOS

- * Not widening - higher congestion, slower speeds in corridor, Willow Creek Road decrease in LOS as well
- * Widening - immediate improvement, increased LOS and remain until 2055, meets city's general plan goals

Safety & Operation:

- * 51 collisions in this area broken down by different types and causes
- * Safety enhancements are a goal of this project
- * Improved intersection operations - increased safety and reduced delays
- * Widening Offers - reduced merge points at existing roundabouts, allows slower traffic to stay right, improved sight lines

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked what a single vehicle accident means.

Mr. Mattingly responded that a single vehicle is one vehicle off the side of the road. The angle is, for example, a left turn across an intersection.

Councilmember Rusing commented that a single vehicle and rear ends are the most common types of incidents listed, and asked if that indicates impaired driving.

Mr. Mattingly responded that it is difficult to pinpoint, but, in general rear ends is inattention, but impairment could be part of it.

Councilman Gambogi asked for comparison to Willow Creek regarding LOS and accidents.

Mr. Mattingly responded that Willow Creek is a five-lane road and the traffic volume is 25,000-30,000 range so it is higher, but LOS is about the same due to the additional lanes (approximately a B on Willow Creek). He does not have crash data on that roadway at the moment. This is all preliminary data at this point.

Mayor Goode asked if there is any way to determine where people are traveling to when they are using this route, and if they are traveling into the area for work or something else.

Mr. Mattingly stated that in general, the estimates are that approximately 33% (each) of drivers are coming in from the Chino Valley and Prescott Valley areas and then additional traffic mixed in for local residents and travelers as well, but there is no way to determine where specifically they are traveling to within Prescott. Regional transportation plans don't provide that kind of information.

Mayor Goode said it is difficult to come up with a solution once capacity is reached. He is concerned that if we hit capacity and drivers can't move through this area they will then go to another road which will cause issues on those.

Mr. Mattingly responded that the regional transportation plan sets zones for research which is fed into the system and tells us how many lanes are needed in and out of an area, etc. We have to look at things regionally.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked about the traffic studies and if they look at the feeders that would come into Highway 89.

Mr. Mattingly responded that there are planned future connections which they look at when doing this type of planning.

Councilmember Rusing asked if staff has come up with any costs estimates.

Ms. Rowitsch stated that we are not far enough along in the process to have that information, but in the future a design consultant will be putting those things together. There have been preliminary estimates for five-year capital planning budgeting purposes.

Public Outreach:

- * Virtual Meeting Room
- * Two Open Houses
- * 673 surveys mailed
- * Paper surveys - city hall, library, public works
- * Media Posts - 576 radio ads, four newspaper ads, 20+ Facebook and Instagram posts
- * Local and regional outreach
- * Surveys were opt-in
- * 1,398 responses to the survey between Aug. 1st and Nov. 10th (1,082 Prescott, 84 Chino Valley, 34 County, 44 from other areas or without an address, 154 Prescott Valley)

Ms. Rowitsch reviewed each of the questions and the responses received by staff to those questions.

Councilman Montoya asked for clarification on the participants in the survey and residents around the corridor being part of the unincorporated county and if there was any way to determine who participated in that area.

Ms. Rowitsch responded that a strong number of the residents around the corridor did respond to the survey. She added that staff has compiled the written comments verbatim and will be included in the virtual meeting room. All contact information will be removed before they are posted.

Top Response Topics:

- * 29% - preserve natural beauty
- * 28% - infrastructure only and do not widen
- * 15% - not needed traffic is minimal
- * 6% - widen road and plan for the future
- * 5% - lower speed limit
- * 4%- add controlled intersections
- * 3% - add or fix widened additional routes, expand for safety or add merge lanes
- * 1% - improve sight lines

Councilmember Rusing stated that there was a lot of neither agree or disagree

which is indicative of people that want to leave this area alone. She asked if the city has looked into asking the County for financial assistance on these projects.

Ms. Rowitsch responded that staff is looking into partners in the area and will evaluate who would be most appropriate to coordinate with on these projects.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked if anyone along either side of the road would be able to tap into the lines that are being installed. She has been contacted by a few residents in the area that would like to be able to do that.

Mr. Sherwood responded that he will look into this. There is a trunk main to that corridor and can look into possible options in that area related to that.

Ms. Rowitsch reiterated the project objectives of the survey and tied them back to Council's Strategic Goals & Planning. All information will be included in the virtual meeting room as soon as they have it. All projects have a community feedback component not always to this scale but that is something that staff does regularly.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked if they looked at the raw data of only people that live in the corridor or commute through the corridor, would the responses to how they view things on the survey look different.

Ms. Rowitsch stated that staff has not broken down to that level, but can certainly look into it.

Next Steps:

- * Request for Statement of Qualifications (RSOQ) - conceptual designs and rock removal
- * Formal Studies - traffic study and effluent pipeline alignment
- * Timeline - four months design contract, 9-12 month conceptual design, 2027 anticipated construction start

Ms. Rowitsch stated that staff will return in approximately four months to move forward with a contract after the RSOQ, and construction would be scheduled for FY27.

Mayor Goode asked if utility placement could continue without having to widen the road. There are many questions that haven't been answered and need to be before moving forward with any long term solutions on these projects. This is an iconic roadway, and he doesn't know that this really needs to be done.

Ms. Rowitsch responded that there is sufficient width to do the utility in the center. However, if the city determined to widen at any distance, the line would have to be removed and redone. Therefore, she doesn't feel it would be beneficial or productive to look at the utilities without looking at the roadway as well.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked if portions will be brought forward sooner than the construction in FY27 in order to address some of the safety issues.

Ms. Rowitsch said that staff needs to do the work and have these consultants to

look at what we can do and move forward with. There are a few years of opportunity to do this and find what those improvements are.

Councilmember Rusing discussed the effluent tank that will go in at Watson Lake Park and stated that she has concerns about the aesthetics of the project.

Mr. Sherwood responded that the tank estimated to be 1million gallons, and it would be set low and buried to blend in with the surroundings.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked if a designer will be informed of the "S" curve and ability to go around some of the more important rock formations. She also asked about easements and rights-of-way in the area.

Ms. Rowitsch responded that they are aware of opportunities on both ends of the roadway in order to avoid rocks, and that will be looked into. She added that all of the asphalt will be resurfaced regardless of whether the road is widened or not.

Mr. Mattingly added that site line issues and traffic didn't seem to be something that participants in the survey were looking to have addressed right away, so he doesn't feel that those types of things would be beneficial or cost-effective.

Ms. Gregory concurred and commented that those changes would require some major engineering as well. Safety improvements will be looked at throughout the project anyway.

Mr. Sherwood responded that there is ample right-of-way in the area to avoid any issues for property owners in the area.

Councilman Gambogi asked if a traffic study would be a part of this project.

Mr. Mattingly confirmed, will look at intersection improvements and specific items that can be addressed through this project. The regional traffic plan should be what the city looks at to see how we should address our roadways, but it isn't going to specifically say where the traffic is coming from or where it is going. That information isn't helpful.

Mayor Goode opened the floor to public comment.

Member of the public Deb Christensen addressed the Council as a Citizen on Patrol volunteer. She stated that she moved here twelve years ago for Prescott's slower pace and natural beauty, things have changed over the years. On her patrols she sees construction trucks with trailers speeding.

Member of the public Barbara Jacobsen addressed the Council regarding the costs of blasting, take the path of least resistance around rocks and there is a great need for more studies in the area. She commented that egress will be needed in the event of an emergency, and the need to get rid of roundabouts. She appreciates the survey and hopes the city doesn't spend too much preliminary money studying.

Member of the public Carter LaBarge addressed the Council regarding all the spokes leading into downtown and the rush to get everyone into downtown without anywhere for them to go. There is a limited amount of space. He addressed the study on accidents and the majority being from inattention, which would happen more with widening the roads. Can't preserve natural resources by drilling holes and blasting the rock out.

Member of the public Marion Elaine Pack addressed the Council regarding roundabouts which were installed to slow traffic. The narrows already do this.

Member of the public Anne Marie Ward addressed the Council and thanked the staff for engaging with the public, she has lived in Prescott her entire life and lives right along the corridor and drive it many times during the day. Most of the time there is no traffic on that road, during prime times there is some slowing and her discussions with her neighbors have shown that they feel the same way. We don't have the money for this project, don't want property tax or sales tax raised. She asked that public works department be redirected and should be made a scenic highway.

Member of the public Joanne Oellers addressed the Council as a resident in the corridor of SR89. They are on city sewer and water. Good information has been shared and discussed today. We have a slow scenic roadway that is special and should be preserved. Save the Dells opposes the widening of the roadway through the Dells. City should have other focuses like replacing and repairing aging infrastructure and additional fire and police stations. Open Houses and limited surveys should be eliminated, and city resources should be us.

Member of the public Tana Karen addressed the Council regarding her investigation of the area over the last several months to look at traffic counts. She added that widening the roads does not help with traffic circulation in areas but increases traffic and speeding.

Member of the public Bonnie McMinn addressed the Council regarding level of service. She stated that level of service A means that you would not see another car. If this road is built there would be 25 years before it would be that which seems extravagant to her. She asked what safety enhancements are being referred to and would like to see those specifically addressed. Widening roads creates more danger and issues.

Member of the public Jean Perle addressed the Council as a resident of the corridor and discussed the research she did on traffic flow through the area.

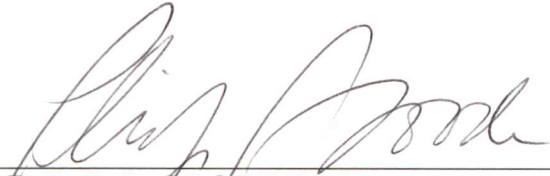
Member of the public Patrick Jacquez addressed Council regarding the beauty through the corridor. Blasting costs money. He stated that he loves the idea of a double Decker road through the Dells.

Mayor Goode thanked the public for their participation, much research and work needs to be done and that will happen so the Council can determine what needs to be done in the area.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Goode adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.



PHILIP R. GOODE, Mayor

ATTEST:



SARAH M. SIEP, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Voting Meeting of the City Council Voting Meeting of the City of Prescott, Arizona held on December 12, 2023. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



Sarah M. Siep, City Clerk

